MATWATCH

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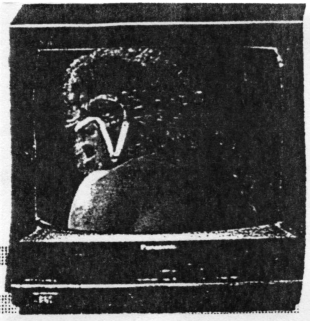

VOL. 3, NO. 3 JULY 16-22

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

SLAUGHTER SIGNS WWF DEAL; STARTS SEPT. 1

STAMFORD CT---Veteran wrestler Sgt. Slaughter has signed a contract to start with the World Wrestling Federation in September.

Slaughter, whose merchandising deal with Hasbro Toys reportedly ends this summer, is said to be entering the WWF as a heel. Yet, the former NWA world tag team co-champion and AWA Americas champ is still included in television trade magazine ads for his cartoon role in the G.I. JOE syndicated series.

Slaughter left the WWF in 1985 for the AWA in a dispute over merchandising.

HAVOC STILL IN CHICAGO DESPITE LABOR COSTS

ATLANTA---The second annual NWA HALLOWEEN HAVOC will stay in Chicago, despite a major hike in labor costs for lighting and production preparations.

Monday of last week, some NWA officials were saying HAVOC would be moved to the Civic Center in Savannah GA. NWA senior vice president Jim Herd said Wednesday, "We did consider Savannah but we think we can get negotiate with the unions on costs."

HAVOC, scheduled Oct. 27, will be the third NWA pay-cable show from Chicago.

STARRCADE TO FLORIDA? IT COULD BE

ATLANTA---As of last Wednesday, World Championship Wrestling officials said they were "looking at" but not committed to St. Petersburg FL as the STARRCADE '90 locale.

NWA executive Jim Herd told MATWATCH: "We are definitely considering St. Petersburg but we probably won't make that decision for a few weeks."

STARRCADE, oldest NWA "supercard" is on tap Dec. 12. If in St. Petersburg, the show would originate at Bayfront Center.

And Remembering Bill

BRUTUS BEEFCAKE: WHAT'S LEFT TO SAY???

I remember the morning I picked up THE COLUMBUS ENQUIRER, a Saturday, and saw Page One headlines in my hometown paper which forced me to reread the fourth and fifth time to convince me I was not dreaming.

The words read WRESTLER MAGNUM T.A. PARALYZED IN ACCIDENT. Just nine nights earlier, I had seen Magnum in action at the Columbus Municipal Auditorium and I was sure he was on his way to an ultimate successful run at the NWA world title and this simply was not fair. I still believe Magnum would have long already been where Sting stood July 7 had his health not been stunted.

In the matter of Ed (Brutus Beefcake) Leslie, I am similarly devoid of words. Beefcake has never reached the pinnacle in his federation as did Magnum but he's been one of the steadiest performer/characters in the six-year modern history of the WWF. He's sold for others, been put over himself and had his most shining moment at last year's SUMMER SLAM in the celebrated main event vs. Randy Savage and Zeus. He's kept a relative low key outside the ring---you hear few items about him because he's about as even-keel as they come. He'll never be pushed to the top but Leslie has been one of the solid supporting performers whose gimmick has been successfully marketable.

As of this writing, word had filtered to us the boating accident he was involved in July 4 pressed his face against the vehicle and crushed virtually every bone in it and all of his teeth. One source close to the WWF says Leslie will never wrestle again, though public word is he will be out "at least 18 months." MATWATCH was told Leslie faces daily therapy for 18 months alone.

Last Thursday, I was told the WWF had decided to acknowledge the truth about Leslie's injury on its television shows. I hope Vince McMahon sticks with that decision. This is not wrestling. It's no angle. This is life and this story has been in every paper in the nation. To ignore it or to make a fictitious departure story from it would be the ultimate in callous business considerations. It would also be immoral. Ed Leslie may not be the top star in pro wrestling but he has given much to it, from the years he toiled in Alabama as Eddie Borders, the "little brother" of Terry Borders, who matriculated to Hulk Hogan. As in the case of Magnum T.A., this is one time not to kiss off fans as fools. Titan Sports owes it to its following to publicly tell the truth. All too tragically, this is where get well cards for Hulk Hogan need to be directed.

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I could not let this week pass without recalling a man you younger fans may have never seen. Bill Cullen was not a TV star of the impact of a Carol Burnett or a Bob Newhart but people who are part of the TV Generation knew him. He was one of the greatest, wittiest and friendliest game show hosts ever and a "games-master" on Goodson-Todman panel shows. He originated THE PRICE IS RIGHT in its 1956-65 version and headlined the panel on I'VE GOT A SECRET for 15 years.

But Bill Cullen started as an announcer in Pittsburgh in the 1940s and called wrestling and roller derby on KDKA radio. He told the story once on TO TELL THE TRUTH. In graduate research, I discovered Cullen was among several early wrestling hosts on NBC's GILLETTE CAVALCADE OF SPORTS, the first network series to feature matches. Bill died last week at the age of 70. He never hid his start with the ring and I admired him for that. I, for one, recognize his pioneer contributor to wrestling. As Bill himself would say, "Thanks ever so much."

MATWATCH
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Pinfall Profile

AfterBASH: MATWATCHERS LIKED IT

The results are in: 213 calls...208 positive, three negative and two average or no opinions on THE GREAT AMERICAN BASH: NEW REVOLUTION. Add a positive to my vote. I agree wholeheartedly with those who feel this show put the NWA back on a positive track, though at least 110 of those who voted "yea" had their specific criticisms of the show. Almost unanimous was the feeling that Tommy Rich-Harley Race and Mike Rotunda-Iron Sheik had no place on a pay-per-view show. But as Jim Herd told me last week about Race: "I didn't want Race on the show. The two guys worked their tails off but Harley doesn't fit what we need to do. Ole (Anderson) just wanted to give him a couple of paychecks. That's over." On the Iron Sheik: "As most people know, we lost a battle with the lawyers on that one. We have to fulfill a commitment to him until January." Herd had fired the Sheik for misconduct at the Nashville Airport after the 1989 WRESTLE WAR but Khoslow Vaziri's attorneys negotiated his return.

As I said last week, I felt the show was well-paced and had no major technical flaws. Jim Ross was on the top of his game and people saw what they wanted to see for months: Ric Flair beaten and Sting with the belt and no more outside salvations. Three criticisms of the telecast itself from here: 1) AUDIO: Herd was indeed not happy with it when he saw the tape. Ringsiders told MATWATCH they'd been told WCW was reluctant to mike areas where the hardcores were for fear of their crazy chants. Not so, says the office. The fact is on several NWA shows, TEXAS SHOOTOUT a recent example, rabid crowd reactions are muffled because of weak sound mixing. One should get the feeling of being inside the arena at a show like BASH but at this one, the crowd appeared to be three blocks away.

2) PRE MAIN-EVENT BUILDUP: in my view, this was lackluster, almost as if to say, "Well, we've had ten matches. Now, here's the world title match." Producer Steve would have cut at least one match and saved time for the kind of feature I've preached since Turner bought the company: an ABC-style "up close and personal" profile with heavy, majestic music---one with either no narrator or an understated Ross narrative---of Sting the challenger with short, 8-15 second soundbites of his private thoughts on his climb to the top, blended with slo-mo and dissolves to his two key past match-es with Flair: the 1988 CLASH I and STARRCADE '89. Bring the music to a crescendo with a freeze-frame of Sting in a victory sign, then come immediately out of the piece with camera backstage on Sting waiting in the wings to be announced, rather than opening with a wide shot at the top of the runway. This prepares viewers for a larger-than-life event, much in the fashion of that FINAL COUNTDOWN video before the final Flair-Steamboat match last year.

3) POST-MATCH: If you were there live, you felt emotion on a level of the Hogan-Warrior postlude. Virtually every fan in Baltimore told me so. It was intense. The weak audio never captured the true strength of the emotion and, as Herd told me, "Only half the pyrotechnics got on the air so that pyro guy is fired." This needed to be a post-seventh game of the World Series situation with no commentary for 90 seconds to two minutes, letting the viewers simply drink in the raucousness of the crowd as if they were there. Plus, I'd have had Ross jump in the ring for the post-match instead of that dry Gordon Solie interview. Gordon showed more emotion when Red Bastein upset Johnny Valentine on TV in 1968. Ross was with Sting from the start of his rise in the UWF and he needed to be the one to put the moment over.

Still, this was a show hard not to like. With a match the calibre of Midnights-Southern Boys, a good opener, solid ring entrances and a popular world title change, it's a saver.

BASH SCORES 2.0 ON CABLE

ATLANTA---THE GREAT AMERICAN BASH: NEW REVOLUTION produced solid results with cable subscribers July 7.

BASH, according to preliminary results, scored a 2.0 buy-rate in pay-cable homes. With a universe of 14.2 million homes, a 2 would equal approximately 285,000 buys. At an average of $16 per home (including late buys and non-discount packages with VIEWER'S CHOICE), gross revenues would total $4.56 million, making this the highest monetary take of any NWA pay-per-view show to date.

In addition, Turner Home Entertainment's WRESTLING HOTLINE 900 number drew 35,000 calls during the three hours of BASH. The average length was six minutes per call. With a median gross of $4.25 per call, T.H.E. grossed approximately $150,000 from the hotline. About 60 per cent of that figure remains inside the Turner organization.

CORNY, M EX WAKE UP MTV

NEW YORK---Jim Cornette, Stan Lane and Bobby Eaton opened a new door Friday morning with an appearance on MTV's morning AWAKE ON THE WILD SIDE.

Clips were shown of Cornette being slammed into a cage by Brian Pillman and Tom Zenk at CAPITOL COMBAT and the veteran Midnight Express manager appeared with his pink tennis racket.

When asked about the current feud with the Southern Boys, Cornette referred to Steve Armstrong's father Bob: "Just like all the people in Georgia, Bob used to walk Steve to school every day. It came in handy---they were in the same grade.

The MTV hosts erroneously referred to the NWA as the National Wrestling Association.

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(SPECIAL NOTE: Excerpts of the Chris Cruise/Terry Funk interview on PRO WRESTLING SPOTLIGHT have been postponed until next week.)

TV TEMPO

July 9-15

(PORTLAND) - [*2 Wks. Ago*]: Steve Doll d. C.W. Bergstrom; Billy Jack Haynes d. Spoiler; LOSER LEAVE PORTLAND: Ricky Santana d. Big Beetlejuice when Tailor-Made Medina tosses Santana loaded purse, which he uses. After, Ginger & Tailor brawl, Ricky slaps Ginger but Doll saves; Beetlejuice d. Bobby Blair by DQ when Blair uses object. Heels attack BJ but Scotty the Body saves; Larry Oliver d. Moondog Moretti; Scotty-Grappler in progress as show ends; FIESTA GARDEN: Santana suckerpunches Doll, handcuffs him to rail. He tries to strip Ginger but faces save. POWERSLAM. [*Last Week*]: Beetlejuice d. Equalizer by DQ when Eq hits BJ w. trash can; Doll d. Moretti; Scott Norton d. Haynes by DQ when Haynes hits Sandy Barr. Grappler hits Norton w. chain but the faces pour milk & cereal on Grap; Scotty d. Al Madril; Oliver d. Grappler by DQ. DRAW-PLUS.

(WWF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]: Randy Savage d. Jim Brunzell; UPDATE: Tito Santana d. Pez Whatley; Curt Hennig d. Mark Thomas; Tugboat d. Tony Burton; Akeem d. Brady Boone; BRO. LUV: Jim Duggan presents Nikoli Volkoff U.S. flag; Orient Express d. Hercules/Jim McPherson & O Ex beat on Hercules after until Paul Roma saves; Koko B. Ware d. Buddy Rose; Warlord d. Gary Jackson; Jimmy Snuka d. Haku by DQ. RESTHOLD.

(WWF/SYND.) - [SUPERSTARS]: Roberts d. Diamond; SEG: Hulk Hogan announces return at SUMMER SLAM; Tugboat d. Burton; O Ex d. Reno Riggins/Gary Jackson; Barbarian d. Red Tyler; BRO. LUV: Hart Foundation challenges Demolition to put up belts. Ax/Smash/Crush backjump Harts, who recover & brawl Demo to locker room; Ware d. Rose; Hennig d. Darnell Yates. DRAW. [CHALLENGE]: Bushwackers d. Bob Bennett/Yates; SEG: Hogan's announcement; Earthquake d. Cotton; Legion of Doom (debut) d. Tony Burton/Jackson; Santana d. Whatley; Warlord d. Jackson. RESTHOLD.

(PWF) - Jim Backlund d. Hurricane Walker; Al Green d. Greg Labonte; Lou Perez d. Lebanese Assassin; Sgt. Rock d. Coconut Kid; Mark Starr d. Tim Parker; Dennis Knight d. Johnny B. Good. BOMB.

(ALL-JAPAN) - [6/24]: TRIPLE CROWN: Stan Hansen d. Terry Gordy & but Gordy/Steve Williams attack Hansen after; Mitsuhara Misawa d. Jumbo Tsuruta. POWERSLAM-PLUS. [7/1]: Bam Bam Bigelow d. Kenta Kobashi; Abdullah the Butcher double DQ vs. Tiger Jeet Singh; Bigelow d. Toshiaki Kawada; Williams d. Kobashi. POWERSLAM.

(IWA) - Lou Perez d. Tony Stetson; Ray Apollo d. Dante DeNucci; Tom Brandi d. Titan Taz Apollo; Terminator d. Eby Playboy; Larry Winters d. Chip Bolger; Derrick Dukes d. Johnny Hotbody; Terry Taylor d. Thunderfoot II. DRAW.

(CHI. CHAMPIONSHIP) - Robert L. Means d. Sgt. Rock; Reynolds Brothers d. Boom Boom Rizzo/Bull Thomas. BOMB.

(PRO WRESTLING '90) - Joel Deaton d. Richards; Hillbillies d. Death Row; Billy Black d. Pat Wright. NO RATING OFFERED.

(NWA/SYND.) - [NWA PRO]: Steiners d. State Patrol; ANGLE: Freebirds bring out "Southern tag team trophy"; WRAPUP: Sting-Flair clips from BASH; Samoan Swat Team d. Mark Kyle/Joe Padera; DANGER ZONE: Paul E. w. Rock & Roll Express; Lex Luger d. Death Row; Buddy Landell d. Tim Hughes; Freebirds d. Vern Henderson/Tim Parker; R&R Ex d. Mike Thor/Krusher Koff; ANGLE: Show ends w. R&R/DOOM standoff. RESTHOLD. [WORLD WIDE]: Paul Orndorff d. Jake Watson; M Ex d. Joe Defuria/Mike Steel; WRAPUP: Sting-Flair at BASH; Brian Pillman d. Fred Avery; Sid Vicious d. John Faulkner; Luger d. Tony Burton; Barry Windham/Arn Anderson d. Joe Cezana/Paul Sampson. RESTHOLD.

SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See. PILEDRIVER - Excellent. POWERSLAM - Good. DRAW - Average. RESTHOLD - Fair. BOMB - Poor. PLUS - Midscale rating.

(CNWA) - Johnny Smith d. Jim Jordan; Ron Ritchie d. Lenny St. Claire; Goldie Rogers d. Steve Gillespie; Biff Wellington d. Duke Myers; Jerry Morrow d. Shane Croft. RESTHOLD.

(USWA/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: (ANGLE) John Tatum offers Tessa engagement ring; (SW TITLE) Tatum d. Bill Dundee; Chris Adams d. Steve Austin by DQ when Austin chairs Chris. Toni Adams creams Jeannie Adams w. kendo stick but Jeannie gets stick away and bashes Toni & Chris; Kerry Von Erich double DQ vs. Matt Borne and during match Chris Von Erich handcuffs Percy Pringle to ropes. RESTHOLD-PLUS. [BEST OF CHAMPIONSHIP]: Dundee d. El Collosal; Jerry Lawler d. Inhuman; Tatum d. Wayne Freeman; Snowman d. Ben Jordan; Chico Torres/Al Coal d. Roberson/Overbein; Jeff Jarrett d. Dog of War but Devastation runs in after. RESTHOLD.

(USWA/WMC) - ANGLE: Eddie Gilbert invites fan from Pittsburgh to have pic taken w. him, then pops the guy because he didn't get his $5,000 from Dundee last week; Dirty White Boys d. Ben Jordan/Ken Raper but DWBs keep beating so Jerry Lawler runs in, bashes both w. baseball bat & piledrives Tom Burton; (From MID-SOUTH) Lawler/Dundee no contest vs. Tony Anthony/John Tatum, which ends w. Tom Burton run-in & Lawler juicing from hits w. chain & DWBs/Tatum attack Tessa; [USWA TITLE] Snowman d. Lawler w. schoolboy as Lawler goes after Downtown Bruno. DWBs/Wild Things attack Lawler & Dundee, so Snowman finally cleans house & helps Lawler out; (STUDIO) Wild Things no contest vs. Freezer Thompson/Deuce Mason when Anthony/Bruno/Eddie attack Lawler at announce desk & Eddie bashes Lawler w. softball bat until faces save. Gilbert volunteers to be Anthony's partner Monday night; (From Dallas) Jeff Jarrett-Devastation-Akbar saga; (STUDIO) USWA TAG TITLE: Rex King/Joey Maggs d. Ken Wayne/Johnny Hotbody. POWERSLAM.

(LPWA) - Bambi d. Jan Flame; Francesca d. Lelani Kai; Nasty Girls d. Misty Blue Simmes/Heidi Lee Morgan w. chain. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(SOUTHEASTERN) - Luke Graham d. Dr. Cool; Denny McCormick d. The Puppy; Assassin/Killer Kyle d. Richie Dye/Dr. Cool; Jim Boss d. Larry Santana by DQ when Graham runs in; Moondog Max d. Chief Little Lynn when Santana interferes. BOMB.

(ICW) - Big Hoss d. Kingpin; Cyclone d. Ray Oddyssey; Roadblock d. Cruz/Package; Jose Luis Rivera d. Mad Russian; Chief Jules Strongbow d. Carolina Crusher; Emory/Ivory d. Equalizers. BOMB.

(NWA/TBS) - [POWER HOUR]: Pillman d. Avery; WNN: Gordon shows clips of El Gigante, Big Van Vader, dressing room

intvw. w. Sting; Luger d. Death Row; INTVW: Bob Caudle discusses new TBS weekend seg, RUNNING THE GAUNTLET; LOUISVILLE SLUGGER: Cornette w. Sid & Arn; Arn/Windham d. Cezana/Sampson; Tracy Smothers d. Michael Hayes by DQ when Jimmy Garvin pushes Tracy off top. Steve Armstrong saves & 4-way brawl erupts. RESTHOLD.
[WCW]: Luger d. Bryan Carr; From BASH: Vader, Gigante, post-BASH w. Sting; Freebirds d. S. Boys w. trunks when Hayes clotheslines Smothers as Tracy has Garvin reverse cradled; Star Blazer d. Kola Khan; Tommy Rich d. Stan Hansen by DQ for over-top. Hansen decks Pee Wee Anderson & creams Tommy w. bell, so Nick Patrick suspends him for 30 days, fines $5000 & Hansen goes nuts & grabs mike from Ross at end. DRAW-PLUS.
[MAIN EVENT]: (NWA TV TITLE) Arn d. Tom Zenk; DANGER ZONE: Paul E. w. R&R Ex; Other winners: Hansen, Luger. DRAW.

LINES OF THE WEEK

1. Jim Cornette, NWA PRO: "We don't want to go to New York. That's where Paul E. is. They have a custody battle there. Judge says, 'Want to live with your mother?' 'No, she beats me.' Judge says, 'Want to live with your father?' 'No, he beats me.' 'Well, who DO you want to live with?' 'I want to live with Paul E. He can't beat anybody.'" 2. Cornette, MTV, on the Armstrongs: "Just like all the people in Georgia, Bob used to walk Steve to school every day. It came in handy---they were in the same grade." 3. Cornette, MTV, on NWA: "These guys don't walk to the ring with chickens on their head." 4. Don Coss, PORT.: "July 21, kids are free. So if you want a good deal on kids, be here." 5. Coss, PORT. LAND, on Moretti: "A dog could get rabies from this guy." 6. Vince McMahon/Jesse Ventura, WWF, on Hogan's return: (J) "Muhammad Ali made the same mistake." (V) "Which time?" 7. Don Owen, PORT.: "Billy Jack Haynes is from Timbuktu but insists on being billed from Detroit---where all the winners are." 8. Cornette, MTV: "They'll be the mild-eyed Southern Boys when we get through with them." 9. Jim Ross, PH, on Fred Avery: "He must have put away a lot of potatoes, coming from Idaho." 10. Sid Vicious, PH: "I'm not no blond, prima donna, cutie pie."

11. Arn Anderson, PH, on Horsemen: "This team was not picked by blood or by sweat but by necessity." 12. McMahon/Ventura, WWF: (V) "Fuji loyal? Only to the Fuji bank." (J) "The Loyal Fuji Bank? Wonder what kind of interest rates he gives?" 13. McMahon/Ventura, WWF, on Heenan's headsets: (J) "He must be in contact with the Goodyear blimp." (V) "I think he's listening to rap music." (J) "I've got it. They see you with a headset, McMahon, and you're probably their hero...dream on." 14. Dutch Mantel, WWW: "The Horsemen are gonna run these guys 'til their tongue hangs out like a long red necktie." 15. Jimmy Garvin, NWA PRO, to Lance Russell: "You're gonna see a deduction in your check." 16. Ricky Morton, DANGER ZONE, to Paul E.: "You can tune a guitar. But you sure can't tune-a-fish." 17. Arn, NWA PRO: "If you want to play poker with your life, we've got the wild card---Sid Vicious." 18. Butch Reed, NWA PRO, on R&R Ex: "You're just like 2 peas in a pod...hard to pick up with a broom." 19. Russell/Michael Hayes, NWA PRO: (LR) "The Rock & Roll won over DOOM by disqualification." (MH) "That's like taking a shower with your clothes on." 20. Craig Johnson, USWA, on Jeannie Adams: "She looks like Bo Jackson getting ready to hit one out of the park."

21. Tessa, WMC, to DWG: "You humiliated me on public television." (I didn't know PBS carried wrestling). 22. Jeff Gaylord, WMC: "I'm gonna be a bigger explosion than the Chernobyl Nuclear Reactor."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Stan Lane, MTV, on WWF: "They work a lot less." 2. Bob Armstrong, NWA PRO, on Freebirds: "They're a slander on mankind."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. MTV host/Lane: (M) "Do you have those action dolls?" (SL) "Yes, anatomically correct." 2. Ventura, WWF, on Tugboat: "The question is: can the ropes hold him?" 3. Sgt. Slaughter, LPWA: "Do you think Bugaloo Brown's any relation to Arsenio Hall?"

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. THE BROTHERS FORMER (Bro. LUV on Harts).

BEST INTERVIEW - Hogan, WWF, no ifs, ands or buts.

BEST PICTURES - 1. PH, Gordon Solie soaked with champagne in Sting victory celebration. 2. PH, blue-haired lady yelling at Michael Hayes. 3. WWF, Heenan wearing headsets. 4. PORTLAND, Santana-Doll brawl. 5. WWW, Tony Schiavone dodging Barry Windham's sweat. 6. WWF, Demolition-Harts brawl. 7. USWA, John Tatum crying as he offers engagement ring to Tessa. 8. PH, Pee Wee Anderson shaking champagne.

ENGLISH LESSON - Tommy Rich, PH: "I hadn't never gave up."

BLOOPER AWARDS - 1. Solie, PH: "Sting defeated Ric Flair in 26 minutes." (Must have been Turner time) 2. Solie, PH: "BAD Van Vader." 3. Owen, PORTLAND: "STEVE Norton."

CLASS ACT AWARDS - 1. Solie/NWA, for wishing Brutus Beefcake a recovery on POWER HOUR. Not only was it a classy move, it also was the first announcement of Ed Leslie's accident on a national TV wrestling show. 2. McMahon, WWF, for making edited announcement on Beefcake during SUPERSTARS.

BOO AWARDS - 1. McMahon, WWF, for saying, "I guess Beefcake will have to postpone his quest for Mr. Perfect's title." When the guy's laying in a hospital bed with plates in his head, was that necessary? 2. PORTLAND and USWA/Memphis for excessive women abuse angles.

TUBE TALK

In case you missed, WCW was moved to 4:05 p.m. EDT after Braves Fri. rainout forced a doubleheader Saturday at 5:05. TBS ran several crawls during POWER HOUR to tell us... Demolition-Harts set up well on BRO. LUV & Demo has made subtlest of turns without actually being turned....Craig Leathers did fast job of editing to get BASH highlights edited into syndie shows, which have to be at local stations by Thursday.

John Arezzi (Anthony) has WRESTLING FANS FANTASY WEEKEND Aug. 24-27: bus trip to the Meadowlands (24th) and 2-day fans confab at Royce Hotel (25-26) with Sting, Chris Cruise, Cactus Jack, Ricky Steamboat, Terry Funk, John Studd, Bruno Sammartino all booked. Superticket (100 available) for all 4 days (including SUMMER SLAM on 27th) for $120. Private dinner with Cruise/Funk on 26th. Call Royce Hotel at (800) 23-ROYCE. Superticket orders to Bodyslam Sports Promotions, P.O. Box 1524, W. Babylon NY 11704 or call (516) 226-3366.

KPDX (Portland/Vancouver) has begun running WEEKDAY WARRIORS, an NWA daytime afternoon strip, which includes POWER HOUR, the 3 syndies and an hour edited WCW.

MATWATCHING

THE RETURN: Hulk Hogan's "unretirement" announcement was arguably the interview of his career. The calm, sincere delivery was the kind a lot of Carolina fans remember from Ric Flair when he turned face earlier in the '80s & wanted from him when he turned last year. It also reminded me of Road Warrior Animal's interview after the Powers of Pain attack on his eye in '88. Hogan waited until the appropriate moment to go from Bruce Banner into the Hulk.

BEEFCAKE DECISIONS: The rumors are going crazy. Someone called Ric Carter's 900 number Friday, claiming to be at the hospital where Brutus was taken & claimed Ed Leslie had died at 3:50 p.m. Untrue, of course. Vince's corect decision to admit the injury to Beefcake came after an earlier decision to ignore it and another one to make a semi-angle from it.

IS KERRY COMING?: Kerry Von Erich's WWF start was skedded for Monday night. He told Titan he'd definitely be there & told Jerry Jarrett he was definitely staying. If he goes, he will get a big push in light of the Beefcake vacancy.

SARGE UPDATE: An update from the Page 1 story...LPWA's Tor Berg has given Slaughter an early release from his contract & Sarge was also skedded to start Monday night. He will actually start as a face and then turn.

FLAIR'S DEAL: From what we've been told, Ric Flair's WCW contract renewal is through 1994 but contains some kind of escape clause at the end of 1992. Money figures aren't official but we've been told the extension years are for an average in the $400,000-500,000 range.

OWEN'S COMING: NWA execs told us Owen Hart has a definite start in Augustthey're trying to figure out how to use him. According to Jim Herd, "He's a flier and Ole's not crazy about fliers." But Herd says they're looking at pairing him with Pillman, a la Canada.

MONDAY IN MEMPHIS: Lawler's juice job in a tag match week before last kept him from winning the USWA belt back. So announced for Monday night was Lawler/Dundee vs. Tony Anthony & Eddie Gilbert w. Tessa & DWG both handcuffed to ropes. The winning team's valet can do anything she wants to the other. But don't bet that Eddie was actually Anthony's partner. John Tatum was "feigning" a neck injury from a piledriver.

After the gang attack during the Snowman-Lawler match, a Snowman-Jeff Gaylord series is starting.

MORE EXPOSURE: Sally Jessy Raphael is trying to put together an episode on wrestling and wants some of the NWA stars on it, including having an actual match.

GETTING READY: Jim Herd told me Tuesday El Gigante indeed is not ready for a full match. "I don't think he really understands yet what he's supposed to do," said Herd. "The guy gets a tremendous reaction but he's not ready for full contact yet."

TOO MUCH EXPOSURE: At NWA tapings for this weekend, Sting took on Barry Horowitz but I hope that's the last TV match for him for a while. I asked Herd about that and he said, "No way. No way are we going to have him in the ring every week. He'll do interviews and a few confrontations." If Sting is to get over as a money attraction, he can't be on TV in squashes as Flair was the last few months.

A FEW MORE WORDS: Herd also added he's ordering at least one competitive match in every NWA show. "We've been around too much before on this all-squash crap," he said. He agreed with MATWATCH's view that the buildup of the main event at the BASH should have been bigger. "I think we could have put more of an aura around that and lifted it higher," said Herd. "But we were around it so much and saw 440 interviews between those guys the last few weeks. But that comes from being too close in the forest. Frankly, I'm glad it's over."

900 NEWS: Since our info on the Carter/Rich Mancuso LIVE WRESTLING TALK line, it has been assigned a new number. Call Ric & Rich at (900) 370-2088. On another note: Joe Pedicino's WRESTLING FANS HOTLINE has suspended operation but Joe says he'll have a new 900 announcement within four weeks.

CALLOUS CALLING?: Lots of speculation continuing on whether Mark Callous will hang with the NWA. He still had not signed his contract as of midweek and was said to be unhappy with his program or lack of. Mark wrestled the entire BASH PPV match with a hip pointer.

COMING CLASH: Herd says the September CLASH XII from Asheville, N.C., will possibly feature a Lex Luger-Stan Hansen U.S. title match which could carry over to HALLOWEEN HAVOC in Chicago. Or maybe Sting/Luger vs. Hansen/Flair. He adds a tag team round robin could be on tap or a Steiners-Midnights U.S. tag team title match. Eventually, don't be surprised to see Steiners-DOOM as a U.S. vs. world matchup.

REMATCHES: I've openly stated, despite some who disagree, that Sting needs many NEW opponents to be successful. If they do six months of Sting-Flair rematches, hang it up. I asked Herd about that and he says Sting-Flair will "definitely not" rematch at HAVOC, though that could change. Herd says Barry Windham could be a possible challenger.

BIG DOINGS?: Extremely reliable sources have told MATWATCH a major discussion took place last weekend in California concerning the proposed new promotion with international financing. We have also had denials the group will be based in Tennessee with Eddie Gilbert as general manager.

NETWORKING: WAWA in Rome GA has apparently dropped Pedicino's PRO WRESTLING '90 for Ted Allen's locally-taped indie show. Allen has been cool to Pedicino since losing his slot on Atlanta's WVEU with the old Southern group.

GEORGIA NOTES: In other bits, PW'90s Billy Black will tour Japan in October. Randy Rose and Tony Gage (Zane) have been dropped and PW'90s former Invader (Mark Smith) turns up on a WORLD WIDE match this weekend vs. the Samoans.

TAPING TIDBITS: Scott Steiner's DDT from the top on a jobber Saturday on WORLD WIDE I'm told is a move of the year. Randy Culley showed up as The Shadow for a WCW match vs. Tommy Rich. Pillman and Zenk are reunited as a team. Others for TV were DOOM vs. Rotunda/Horner (NWA PRO) and Ron Sim-[illegible]-Ricky Morton (NME). In a Mark Callous-JYD dark match (won on DQ by JYD), the crowd yelled, "B.L.T" at Dog.

RATINGS RAP

PRIME TIME, MAIN EVENT SHARE

TOP; WCW TAKES TUMBLE

Drawing plenty of curiousity from the previous night's GREAT AMERICAN BASH world title change, NWA MAIN EVENT topped last week's Nielsen ratings for cable with 1.55 million homes but WWF PRIME TIME WRESTLING tied NME in total ratings.

PTW's 2.8/4.9 share was substantially down from its 3.5 of two weeks ago but still steady for mid-summer.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING on TBS posted its lowest figure (2.3/6.2) since Ole Anderson became booker but much of that is attributed to PPV subscribers tuned to the pre-game show for the BASH at 6:30. Anderson's seven-week tenure is still averaging a strong 2.7/7.2 for WCW.

NWA POWER HOUR's rating may have been decieving, picking up a 2.1, its highest in three months. But the show was joined a half-hour in progress after a long Atlanta Braves game. WWF ALL-AMERICAN rallied to a 2.6, its top figure since WRESTLEMANIA Sunday.

Special note: syndication figures have been sporadic in their availability. BROADCASTING Magazine and VARIETY have dropped them and the HOLLYWOOD REPORTER is the only national source publishing syndie numbers for wrestling.

CABLE

Week Ending July 9	Rating	Share	Total Homes
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 7/8)	2.8	6.6	1.55 million
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 7/9)	2.8	4.9	1.48 million
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 7/8)	2.6	8.5	1.39 million
NWA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (TBS 7/7)	2.3	6.2	1.27 million
NWA POWER HOUR (TBS 7/6)*	2.1	4.1	1.12 million
NWA POWER HOUR (Replay) (TBS 7/7)	0.7	8.0	382,000

* - Joined in progress at 10:55 p.m.

MATWATCH SHOPPERS NETWORK

PAT HOED, 2223 N. Hobart Blvd., LOS ANGELES CA 90027, has a four-volume set of LUCHA LIBRE tapes available. All are $17.00 each.

CANADIAN WRESTLING REPORT, 15 Penrose Ave., KITCHENER ONT, CANADA N2A 1E9, has its farewell double issue in August. Drop $1 to Greg Oliver for the finale as a fine young editor "retires" for a college career.

BRUCE GINEVAN JR., 405 Deep Run Parkway, ELK RIDGE MD 21227, wants to trade for WINDY CITY or PRO WRESTLING '90. He has USWA/Memphis or Dallas, Portland, Lucha Libre, ICW, LPWA or AWA to swap.

SCOTT DECKER, 46 Dorrance St., HAMDEN CT 06518, is after 1988 SCWs from Miss Kitty's, 1988 Memphis arena matches, tapes of WWC and issues of NWA WRESTLING WRAPUP (Vol. 1, No. 2 and Vol. 2, No. 6). Scott can offer from a 560-tape library, including ICW, NWF, Japan, CWA, 5-Star and Calgary.

TAPE UPDATE, Brian Tramel's monthly has a BRUISER BRODY cover this month. You'll enjoy B.T.'s sense of humor and his offbeat features. Price: 50 cents an issue. If you buy tapes from B.T., you get 3 bonus issues of T.U. Send to: 1806 Self Circle, Apt. B, JONESBORO AR 72401.

MATWATCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

NEW RATES EFFECTIVE THIS WEEK

(U.S./CANADA) $5 for 5 issues, $10 for 11 issues, $15 for 16 issues.

(OVERSEAS) $9 for 5 issues, $18 for 11, $27 for 16.

(BONUS OFFER) You receive one free issue for every 5-issue set you give as a gift. CHECK, CASH or MONEY ORDER to: MATWATCH, 16 ROBIN HOOD LANE, JACKSON TN 38305.

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